

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-07 COME-00

TRSE-00 /025 W

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R 130500Z JAN 76

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2682

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 0033

E.O. 11652 XGDS 3

TAGS: PINT, BEXP, IZ

SUBJ: COMMERCIAL CONTACTS AND IRAQI SECURITY AGENCIES

1. WITH EXPANSION OF COMMERCIAL LINKS BETWEEN IRAQ AND THE US AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES, CONFLICTS ARE INEVITABLY DEVELOPING BETWEEN IRAQ'S POWERFUL AND PARANOID BULLY BOYS IN THE SECURITY SERVICES AND THE CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE ECONOMIC MINISTRIES WHO ARE TRYING TO GET ON WITH THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. PRINCIPAL VICTIMS ARE IRAQI NATIONALS WHO AROUSE SUSPICIONS OF IRAQ'S SECURITY APPARACHNICKS BY HAVING NORMAL CONTACTS AS CONSULTANTS, LAWYERS, OR CIVIL SERVANTS WITH WESTERNERS. IN RECENT MONTHS, RESTRICTIONS ON SUCH CONTACTS SEEM TO HAVE EASED AND SOME IRAQI BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL MEN HAVE EVEN HAD THE COURAGE ISAPPEAR AT SOCIAL EVENTS GIVEN BY USINT OFFICERS FOR VISITING AMERICAN TRADE DELEGATIONS.

2. MORE RECENTLY, HOWEVER, USINT HAS RECEIVED INICATIONS THAT THE SECURITY MEN ARE AGAIN INTIMIDATING IRAQIS FOR HAVING CONTACTS WITH WESTERNERS OR WESTERN EMBASSIES. A LAWYER WELL KNOWN TO USINT, WHO REPRESENTS SEVERAL LARGE AMERICAN COMPANIES, HAS RECENTLY COME UNDER SUSPICION AND HAS BROKEN OFF ALL SOCIAL OR BUSINESS CONTACTS WITH USINT. THE SECURITY MEN HAVE ALSO MADE INQUIRIES WITH VARIOUS IRAQI NATIONALS ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF VISITNG US BUSINESSMEN, WHOM THEY SUSPECT OF BEING CIA AGENTS, EVEN THOUGH THEY CAME TO IRAQ ON LEGITIMATE BUSINESS TRIPS.

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3. IRAQIS HAVE GOOD REASONT TO BE FRIGHTENED BY THE ATTENTIONS

OF THE SECURITY SERVICES SINCE THERE IS NOT HABEAS CORPUS OR
ANY OTHER EFFECTIVE RESTRAINT ON THE WHIMS OF THE SECURITY
PERSONNEL. IRAQIS IN PAST HAVE SUFFERED TORTURE, IMPRISONMENT,
AND EVEN EXECUTION FOR INNOCENT CONTACTS WITH WESTERNERS.
TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, NO AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN HAVE BEEN
QUESTIONED BY SECURITY AGENTS, BUT VISITING AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN
SHOULD BE BRIEFED IN ADVANCE ON THE PROBLEMS IRAQI NATIONALS MAY
HAVE AS A RESULT OF THEIR CONTACTS WITH VISITING AMERICANS.
IN FACT, IT IS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING THAT THERE ARE STILL SO
MANY IRAQIS WHO SEEM WILLING TO ACCEPT THE CRISIS INVOLVED IN
HAVING BUSINESS CONTACTS WITH FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRADE PROMOTION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, POLITICAL STABILITY, SECURITY, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ellisoob
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BAGHDA00033
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760011-0874
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760164/aaaacenl.tel
Line Count: 73
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 APR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <13 OCT 2004 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMMERCIAL CONTACTS AND IRAQI SECURITY AGENCIES
TAGS: PINT, BEXP, IZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006